Probable origins of Resident Evil in Art history (note)

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Draft

Resident Evil, its architecture in particular, seems to have been inspired by the palaces (Palazzo) and villas of Italy, its architects as well as its various – illustrious and less – inhabitants : nobility, (high) clergy, their family and serveants/employees.

One probable source are the institutions relating to houses and gardens[1] and people described in art history books like Coffin's *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (and in turn their own sources...).

About the Villa Medici in Rome, the Florentine architect Bartolomeo Ammanati, Cardinals Ricci, the Medici cardinal, (the Cardinal's brother) the Grand Duke Francesco and company :

> "The apartment toward the south at the level of the salon was the Cardinal's private apartment with communication to the statue gallery, to his private garden (giardino segreto) and, by the small spiral stair, to the carriage room bellow. In a Mezzanine above

[1] country retreats, (popal) hunting lodges, vines (vigna), villa loggia, garden piazza, fountains, studies, libraries, stairs, galleries, paintings, fresco, sculptures etc. etc.

> part of the Cardinal's apartment, and entered from the major spiral stair south of the salon was the Cardinal's library. The apartment above the Cardinal's was decorated later in the century and contained the chapel above the library. On the upper floor toward the north is the apartment still decorated with the friezes from the time of Cardinal Ricci. The new grand apartment added above the garden loggia was to serve as a splendid guest apartment. The painted decoration of the frieze and coffered wooden ceilings must have been commissioned of Zuchi in 1588 after the Cardinal's abdication, but one ceiling was left unfinished probably because of the artist's death.
>
> In the gardens, the major organization had already been developed by Cardinal Ricci to which the Medici cardinal made prominent additions, especially the so-called Mount Parnasus"[2]

Sentences like the above encapsulate perfectly the first video games in the series (RE 1 - 3) as well as the paradigm of the so-called "classic" Resident Evil[3].

Previously the same architect was described : "The elderly architect was obviously reluctant to return, but in April he is recorded as being there."[4]

In RE the architect famously or poignantly dies in the context of the construction, trapped in one of the many intrigues, designs of the building.

Further :

> "... the cardinal acquired additional land to improve the setting of the villa. (...) This acquisition not only guaranteed his control of the land between his villa and the city but was probably the first step toward the projected monumental access to the villa with great ramps of stairs leading up the hill around a Fountain of Pegasus as depicted in one of the Zucchi views in the Cardinal's study."[5]

[2] p. 229.

[3] briefly, imperfectly described as slow atmospheric horror. eg., found further also in RE0, RE1 Remake, parts of RE4 as for video games. See also the first film adaptation.

[4] p. 225.

[5] p. 226. (In question is a fresco, c.f. p. 224.)

And further among many other relevant passages :

> "A small spiral stair led from the carriage room to the Cardinal's private apartment in the south end of the villa, offering him privacy in his visits. At the level of the garden the gallery was in two stories of which the lower one was the grand gallery for the exhibition of the Cardinal's sculpture and served to define and to shade the south edge of the garden piazza off the loggia of the villa."[6]

Most striking perhaps : design/layout of the Villa plans (on p. 227-228, three images of figure 139) are nearly identical with the Resident Evil video games' own, pay attention to "Scala 1 : 500", the symbol on the upper right of the frame (direction/orientation?) and legends such as "Plan of the ground floor" or "*Plan of the "piano mobile"*".

Compare with the plans of the villa and the police station, for example.

For exterior appearance or views see figures 140 and 138 : City Elevation and Garden Facade.

Figure 137 is of a fresco by Zucchi, view of the fountain.

Paintings and art abund in Resident Evil and are a notable part (Borghese family, Rembrandt etc.).

[6] p. 228.

Appendix

- “Villa Medici, Plans” (The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome, pp. 226-227)

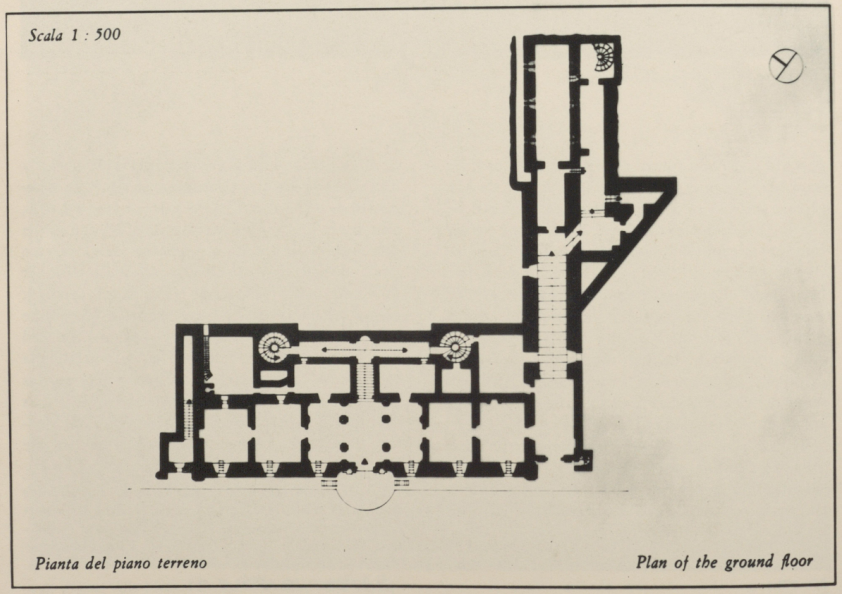
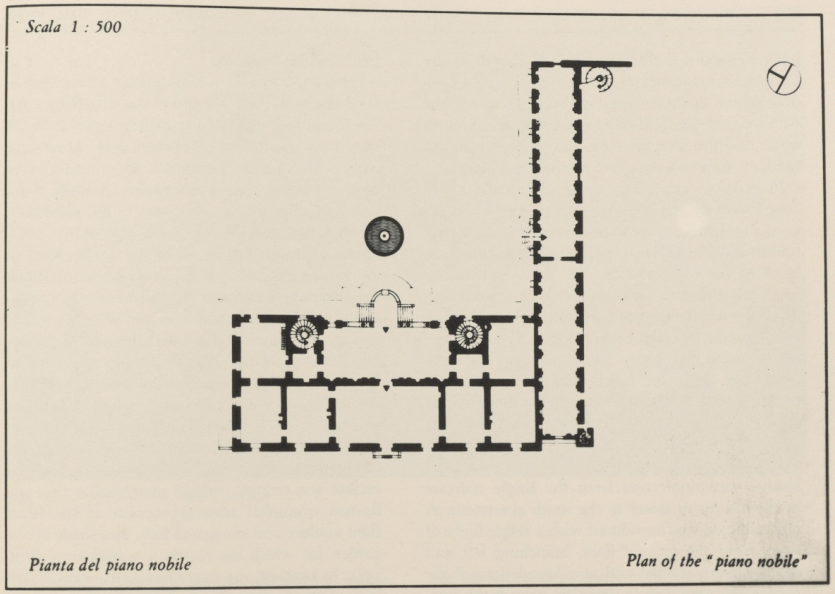
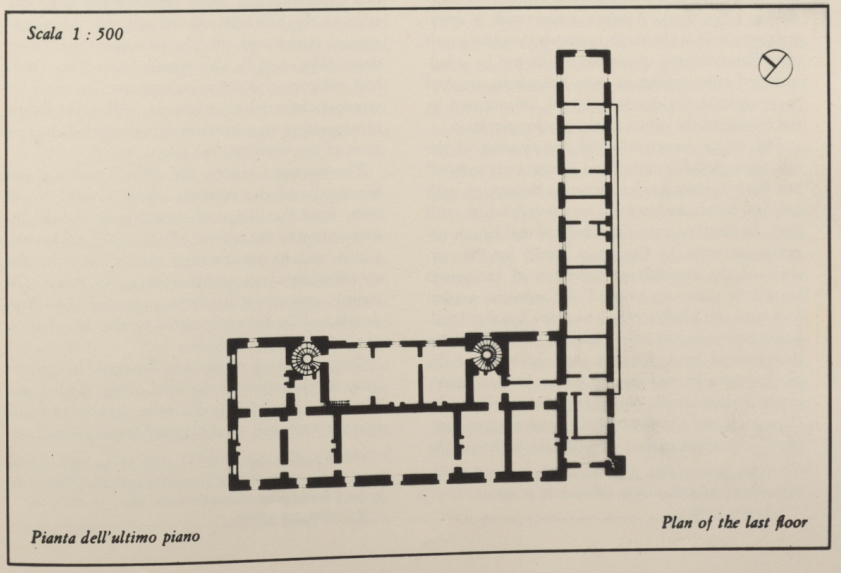
References :

The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome
David Coffin
Princeton University Press
1979
Princeton monographs in art and archaeology xxxiv
“Published for the department of art and archeology Princeton University”

(a study published decades before publication of the video games)
especially pp. 225-229 and chapter 7 “The Hill of Gardens”, pp. 215-238

bibliography is on pp. 237-238. (“La construction de la Villa Médicis” by Boyer etc.)

other villas



139. Rome, Villa Medici, Plans